

Message Text

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54

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 IO-10

/073 W

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R 161100Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5347

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, LE

SUBJECT: KARAME CABINET WINS OVERWHELMING VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

REF: BEIRUT 8317

1. SIX-MAN "RESCUE CABINET" OF PRIMIN RASHID KARAME, WHICH
WAS NAMED JULY 1 (REFTEL), RECEIVED LANDSLIDE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE
(82 VOTES OUT OF TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF 99) FROM LEBANESE PARLIAMENT
JULY 15 (FBIS JN152107Y). PARLIAMENT CONVENED MORNING
JULY 15 TO HEAR BRIEF POLICY STATEMENT READ BY KARAME AND
RECONVNED SAME AFTERNOON TO ACCORD APPROVAL AFTER ONLY EIGHT
HOURS TOTAL DEBATE.

2. POLICY STATEMENT, IN WHICH MINISTER GHASSAN TUEINI HAD
HAND, WAS GENERAL DOCUMENT EMPHASIZING NEED TO MAINTAIN LAW
AND ORDER IN AFTERMATH OF SPRING/SUMMER CLASHES AS WELL AS
WORK FOR COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RECOVERY. STATEMENT
TOUCHED, INTER ALIA, ON FOLLOWING POINTS:
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A) "JUST AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION, FAR REMOVED FROM ALL CONSIDERATIONS AND INFLUENCES, TO DETERMINE WHAT HAPPENED AND TO ESTABLISH REASONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AT EVERY STAGE."

B) DUTY OF GOVERNMENT, "DURING TIME AVAILABLE FOR IT," TO RESTORE LEBANON'S ECONOMIC VITALITY AND, IN PARTICULAR, DEAL WITH PROBLEMS OF PORT, AIRPORT AND TOURIST FACILITIES.

C) RECOGNITION OF LEBANON'S INEXTRICABLE BOND WITH PALESTINIANS AND CABINETS'S "CONFIDENCE" THAT "PALESTINIAN BRETHREN WILL IN TURN RESPECT OUR CONDITIONS AND LAWS..."

D) RECOGNITION THAT LEBANON IS "INDIVISIBLL PART OF ARAB WORLD" WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY OPEN TO ALL AND ALLY OF NO "AXIS OR BLOC." (I.E., WITHIN THE ARAB WORLD).

E) COMMITMENT TO UPGRADING LEBANESE ARMY (CONSCRIPTION IS IMPLIED) AND MAKING ARMY AN INSTITUTION WHICH WILL "INSTILL CONFIDENCE IN HEARTS OF ALL CONCERNED."

F) COMMITMENT TO WORK FOR "KIND OF SOCIETY WHICH ALL LEBANESE ASPIRE TO, A SOCIETY OF JUSTICE, QUALIFICATION AND FREEDOM."

G) COMMITMENT TO "NATURALIZATION LAW WHICH WILL EXTEND LEBANESE CITIZENSHIP TO THOSE QUALIFIED."

H) COMMITMENT TO "NATIONAL SOCIAL POLICY" CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH CAUSES OF RECENT STRIFE.

3. COMMENT: AS EXPECTED, EIGHT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT LOYAL TO KAMAL JUMBLATT (I.E., NATIONAL STRUGGLE FRONT BLOC) DID NOT RPT NOT ATTEND SESSIONS AND THEREFORE DID NOT VOTE. ACCORDING TO BEIRUT PRESS, DR. ABDUL MAJID RAFAT (PRO-IRAQI BAATH DEPUTY FROM TRIPOLI) AND DR. ALI AL KHALIL (SHIITE DEPUTY FROM TYRE) LEFT CHAMBER IN PROTEST BEFORE RPT BEFORE VOTE, FORMER AFTER CRITICIZING POLICY STATEMENT FOR FAILING TO REFER TO "NATIONAL DEMANDS." AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE ALL DEPUTIES REMAINING AND VOTING CAST THEIR VOTES IN SUPPORT OF KARAME CABINET.

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4. DESPITE DR. RIFAT'S ALLEGATION THAT CABINET STATEMENT DID NOT TREAT "NATIONAL DEMANDS," KARAME DID IN FACT DANCE SKILLFULLY AROUND SEVERAL KEY ISSUES EMBODIED IN OBJECTIONS OF LEFTIST AND MUSLIM CRITICS TO PRESENT LEBANESE SYSTEM. ITEMS 2(C), (D), (E), AND (G) REFER SPECIFICALLY TO POINTS EMBODIED IN SO-CALLED "NATIONAL DEMANDS" AND ITEM 2(F) APPEARS TO BE OBLIQUE ATTACK ON CURRENT CONFESIONAL BASIS OF DEISTRIBUTING POSTS AND PERQUISITES TO BENEFIT OF LEBANESE CHRISTIANS, PARTICULARLY

MARONITES. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THERE WAS MUCH DISCUSSION PRECEDING FINALIZATIN OF POLICY STATEMENT BETWEEN KARAME AND HIS MUSLIM SUPPORTERS REGARDING INCLUSION OF SUCH ITEMS IN DOCUMENT. KARAME WAS UNDERSTOOD TO BELIEVE THAT MENTION SHOULD BE MINIMAL IN VIEW OF HIS UNDERSTANDING WITH JUMBLATT AND PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL THAT PRESENT CABINET WILL BE EXPANDED WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS. NEVERTHELESS, WE ANTICIPATE HEARING MUCH ABOUT THE "NATIONAL DEMANDS" DURING TENURE OF PRESENT CABINET AND BEYOND.

GODLEY

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